

STATEMENT BY SENATOR STROM THURMOND (D-SC) ON SENATE FLOOR,
FEBRUARY 27, 1956, REGARDING TEXTILE IMPORTS.

Mr. President, I, too, am deeply concerned with the textile situation with regard to imports and exports.

In 1947, which was a peak year for cotton textile exports from the United States, this country imported only 3.2 per cent as much cotton textiles as it exported, based on dollar value.

In 1955, we exported \$244,700,000 worth of cotton textile products, but last year textile imports amounted to \$120,900,000. This means that imports in 1955 were 49.4 per cent as great as our exports of cotton textile goods.

The significant point in these figures is that we are rapidly losing our export markets for cotton textile goods.

This means trouble for the cotton farmer as well as for the textile manufacturer.

In 1947, the United States was exporting the equivalent of one and a half million bales of cotton in the form of textile products. But in 1955 our exports of textile products amounted only to about a half million bales of cotton.

Practically all of our cotton textile exports are in the form of yard goods. Our overseas purchasers buy from this country to get American skill in designing and styling and because of the speed with which we can deliver their orders compared with other textile manufacturing countries.

Much of the imported goods from Japan to the United States is in the form of made-up goods, such as shirts and

blouses. A comparison of yard goods imported with yard goods exported does not accurately reflect the trend.

About 50 per cent of the cotton textile fabrics imported from Japan is made-up goods. I am informed that in December alone 21,000,000^{YARDS} of yard goods were shipped from Japan to the United States. In addition to this, it is reported that Japan shipped 15,000,000 cotton blouses and shirts to this country in December. This would mean another 18,750,000 yards of cotton goods in the blouses and shirts. Other products totaling two or three million yards of made-up goods also were shipped to the United States in December.

This would mean a total of 41,000,000 yards of cotton textile goods -- made-up and not made-up -- were exported from Japan to the United States in December, 1955.

On the other hand, our exports of cotton textiles are estimated by the Export Association as amounting to only 39,000,000 yards of goods in December.

Thus, based on these figures, for the first time in history the month of December saw the United States import more cotton textile products than were exported from this country in the same month.

The United States is a natural textile exporting country because we have the largest industry in the world and offer more diversified goods. Also, we are the largest producer of raw cotton.

I am deeply concerned with this situation which has developed. If the Administration does not take administrative action to halt this dangerous trend, I hope that the Congress will act.

COPY OF A LETTER FROM SENATOR THURMOND TO
SECRETARY OF STATE DULLES-REQUESTING IMPORT
QUOTAS ON FOREIGN-MANUFACTURED TEXTILES,
FEBRUARY 27, 1956

United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON
INTERSTATE AND FOREIGN COMMERCE

February 27, 1956

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Honorable John Foster Dulles
Secretary of State
State Department
Washington, D. C.

Dear Mr. Secretary:

Because of my deep concern on behalf of the more than one million persons of this nation's textile industry, 133,000 of whom are in my own State of South Carolina, I am writing to ask you to consider approval of negotiating quota agreements with Japan which has poured an increasing stream of cotton textile products into the United States. Or you could exercise authority already vested in you by law.

Government reports and trade reports out of Japan show that textile imports greatly increased during the last months of 1955. Based on the surge of imports since the negotiation of the GATT agreements started in Geneva last year, I believe it is no longer wise to judge the effect by comparing the total of 1955 textile imports with the 1954 total. Even that comparison shows a tremendous increase, but the data of the recent months should be recognized as a danger signal.

Our domestic cotton producers and our textile manufacturers and the people they employ will all suffer unless adequate safeguards are established to protect against imported goods manufactured from cheap cotton and by low-wage labor in foreign countries.

From the base periods of 1947-49, the cotton textile industry price index has declined 8 per cent, while the index of other industries has risen 18 per cent on an average. Consumption of cotton products has been nearly static since the base period while consumption of all other industrial commodities has increased about 17 per cent.

If penalties such as the agreements negotiated for the reduction of textile tariffs last year are to be imposed on the industry, the result is that cotton textiles have no prospect of progressing like other industries.

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Unless action is taken by this country, we cannot hope for Japan to continue voluntary control of their exports. Only by self-protection, or at least by negotiated agreements for protection of our interests, can the United States prevent an eventually disastrous volume of textile goods from being poured into this country.

I urge your immediate attention to this matter.

With kindest regards,

Sincerely,

Strom Thurmond

ST/mwk